

OGC 70-1543

4 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH Division

SUBJECT : Information on Criminal Activities in the Caribbean

REFERENCE : Your Memo to the DDP, dated 20 July 1970
Subject: Need for Information on Criminal Activities in the Caribbean

1. In answer to your request in the referenced memorandum, Mr. John Warner and myself met with Mr. Henry Petersen, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice, on 4 September 1970. Mr. Petersen was most sympathetic to our problem of acquiring information relative to the existence of subversion through corruption in various Caribbean countries.

2. Mr. Petersen explained the majority of information available to the Department of Justice relates to criminal acts performed within the United States and, in view of the limitations imposed on prosecutions for criminal acts, involves primarily U. S. citizens. He did say, however, certain reports might identify people who would be of interest to our Agency as having participated in conspiracies with principals suspected of criminal activities within the United States. Mr. Petersen stated if it would be of any help to our Agency, he would make arrangements to have the files of the Department of Justice made available for a review at the Department of Justice by an Agency officer with the idea of hopefully locating names of operational interest which might be included in the various criminal case files.

3. Mr. Petersen went on to explain they receive their information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and, although the

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Bureau claims to be totally forthright in disseminating its information, Mr. Petersen recognizes that a certain amount of selectivity and screening takes place before information is sent to the Department of Justice. Unfortunately, Mr. Petersen did not have a solution to offer that might assist your people in coming up with names to place particular requirements on the Bureau. Conceivably, a few of the case files might identify names currently available to the Bureau that are not known to WH Division.

4. We will await your decision to the above suggestion as a reasonable approach in view of the man-hours involved and without assurance of attaining profitable information.

/ [Redacted]

Assistant General Counsel

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OGC [Redacted]

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20 JUL 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT : Need for Information on Criminal Activities
In the Caribbean

1. The activities of organized crime in the Caribbean area are a matter of growing concern in the context of our responsibility for reporting on factors affecting political stability. Political manipulation of small island governments, which can be characterized as "subversion through corruption," poses a threat to political stability potentially as great, in some cases, as that of the subversive Black Power movements which are emerging as forces to be reckoned with throughout the area. The large sums of money associated with gambling casinos, tourist resorts and other business ventures believed to be operated by organized crime in the Caribbean constitute a powerful attraction in dealing with venal government officials of impoverished island countries. Local police forces, even where untarnished by corruption, lack the resources to cope with organized crime of the magnitude that may threaten them. The Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands, which is expected to achieve full independence in 1973, is an area of special concern in view of its geographic proximity to the U.S. and the extensive criminal activity there which is believed to be directed from south Florida. The Associated State of Antigua, whose political stability was recently threatened by a series of labor strikes, may also be ripe for political manipulation by criminal elements. Even Sint Maarten, which is controlled by the Dutch (southern half) and the French (northern half), is not immune to criminal attention which is believed to be focused on the gambling casino located on the Dutch side of the island.

2. The reliance on CIA sources for information on criminal activities in the Caribbean is neither feasible nor desirable, since this would duplicate, at least to some extent, efforts by the FBI in cooperation with the British service (MI-5), and would divert attention from other priority and more orthodox operational coverage and intelligence targets. A more realistic approach would be to obtain

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the information from the FBI or some other component of the Department of Justice on a systematic basis. A request to the FBI for such information a few months ago resulted in an informal offer to release information to CIA on a case-by-case basis when the FBI determines that the case has internal security implications. The FBI declined to release general criminal information in which they can see no security aspect on the grounds that the information is too sensitive and their investigations too important to divulge without a real need to know. Virtually no FBI information on criminal activity in the Caribbean has been received to date.

3. Another possible avenue of approach to the desired information is through Mr. Henry E. Petersen, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice. Mr. Petersen, with whom the Office of the General Counsel has friendly relations, is believed to be in a good position to cover the broad spectrum of information of interest to us, and to be willing to cooperate. He has not been approached in this matter, however, pending a closer examination of how this may affect CIA liaison equities with the FBI.

4. Since efforts to obtain the desired information from the FBI have not been successful, approval is requested to pursue the matter with Mr. Petersen, through the Office of the General Counsel.

(Signed) William V. Brock

[Redacted Signature]

Chief

Western Hemisphere Division

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cc: ADDP

CONCUR:

Signed: James Angleton

Chief, Counter Intelligence Staff

21 JUL 1970

Date

General Counsel

21 JUL 1970

Date

APPROVED:

/s/ Thomas H. Karamessines

Deputy Director for Plans

23 JUL 1970

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